

# ABOUT GROWTH

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## Focusing capital facilities in specific areas

By **Derek T. Chisholm, AICP**  
Clark County Long Range Planning

Clark County leaders are making a commitment to focus on economic development and a healthy balance of jobs and housing. Their vision is a county that is a regional economic powerhouse, not a "bedroom community" for the City of Portland, Oregon.

In the past, Clark County has dispersed its capital improvements expenditures throughout the county providing partial solutions to many areas, but not complete solutions to priority areas. Given the limited resources available for infrastructure, the county has adopted a more strategic approach to investment of public funds. The county can focus capital improvements on specific areas. Such areas contain "fully-served" land because all public facilities meet or exceed standards.

Clark County has identified several focused public investment areas (FPIAs). The market responds well to "shovel ready"

sites at which development can begin as soon as plans are completed.

Working with consultants from Henderson, Young & Company and David Evans and Associates, the county studied 17 areas. Findings were made for the number of jobs that each area could yield, and the cost of providing key infrastructure. The results provided information for making cost benefit comparisons. These comparisons were used to help make decisions on amending the urban growth boundary, as well as the programming of areas for economic development projects. The 20-year list of road improvement projects clearly identifies the FPIAs that are served by each investment. And, the six-year Transportation Improvement Plan prioritization formula is weighted to favor the FPIAs.

Focused public investment planning has been incorporated, as one of three pillars, into the new Clark County Economic Development Action Plan. Specific implementation of this concept can be seen

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**The Legacy Hospital is one of the facilities under construction in the Discovery Corridor, one of Clark County's new focused public investment areas.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF CLARK COUNTY

## ABOUT GROWTH

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CTED administers the state's Growth Management Act. Its role is to assist and enable local governments to design their own programs to fit local needs and opportunities, consistent with the GMA.

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# Capital facilities planning provides 'reality check' for communities



**By Leonard Bauer, AICP  
Managing Director, Growth  
Management Services**

One of the keys to planning for the future success of Washington communities is strategic capital facilities planning.

The most basic expectation of citizens of any community, and of the state as a whole, is that local and state governments provide for adequate infrastructure to serve them with water, sewer, parks, public buildings, and other necessary public facilities.

As population growth continues in Washington, additional capital facilities will be needed. Many of these facilities will be costly to fund. To prioritize and pay for critical facilities requires careful planning on an ongoing basis.

Effective capital facilities planning is more than a budgeting exercise. Too often local and state governments make the mistake of considering a capital budget to be the same as a capital facilities plan (CFP). Such an approach – "as long as the budget is balanced for the coming year, everything is fine" – dooms that community to the consequences of short-term thinking.

What happens several years later, when major upgrades to existing facilities are needed that are beyond the financial capacity of the city or county? Without careful, advance financial planning to set aside funding ahead of time, the community will have to choose between taking on considerable debt or losing an important opportunity to grow and improve. Unfortunately, that's the position in which many Washington jurisdictions currently find themselves.

When the Washington State Legislature passed the Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1990, it recognized the vital importance of a CFP by requiring it to be part of a local government's comprehensive plan. The GMA's vision is that cities and counties integrate their projections for future land

use and economic development with their financial capabilities to support them. By combining in-depth discussion of how it will grow and how to pay for infrastructure to support that growth, a community can adjust its vision for the future to ensure it is within its means. Capital facilities planning serves the important role of a "reality check."

However, cities and counties vary in the amount of detail and thoroughness that goes into developing their CFPs, as well as in how often they review them to ensure their continued effectiveness.

That's why the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) is offering a program to assist communities in developing, carrying out, monitoring, and updating their CFPs.

CTED has spent several years identifying and testing a template that can be used by local governments to develop a CFP (see articles on page 4). It is based in Microsoft Excel and includes tools to estimate the cost of needed facilities, prioritize those facilities, and assess the financial ability of the community to carry out the plan.

Additional tools allow local governments to manage and monitor implementation of the plan.

This issue of *About Growth* shares stories of a number of local governments that have successfully used capital facilities planning to support their healthy growth and development. CTED's Growth Management Services' staff are available to provide additional examples or assist you in your comprehensive planning, including annual updates to your CFP, at (360) 725-3000 or [www.cted.wa.gov/growth](http://www.cted.wa.gov/growth).

## Correction

In the fall 2004 issue of *About Growth*, the article by William Grimes, AICP, principal, Studio Cascade, Inc., should have read: 32 Eastern Washington communities undertake critical areas updates.

# Capital facilities planning important to city

**By Richard E. Raymond**

**Principal Engineer,  
City of Spokane Capital Programs, and**

**Jo Anne Wright**

**City Planner,  
City of Spokane Planning Services Department**

When Spokane County's high population growth from 1989 to 1993 required that the county and the cities within its boundaries plan under the GMA in 1993, the City of Spokane produced a new comprehensive plan.

A wide-ranging citizen participation process, called Spokane Horizons, was launched in 1995 to develop the new plan, which was adopted in 2001.

The purpose of the comprehensive plan is to provide Spokane residents with a high quality of life. The plan offers goals and policies on the provision of adequate public facilities and services, concurrency, coordination, and environmental concerns, among others.

It also contains the CFP, a 20-year program that includes six-year financing plans – moving “windows” within the 20-year planning horizon – for spending public funds on capital facilities and amenities needed to address, support, and implement the plan.

The essential services provided by capital facilities are crucial to the health, safety, and welfare of community residents. Residents need to be assured that service capacity is adequate to meet demand. It's particularly important to ensure that efforts to provide for future growth don't degrade or diminish services to existing users. Also, the location of capital facilities and utilities must be coordinated with the comprehensive plan to support and foster development as specified in the plan.

The citizens of Spokane want the comprehensive planning process to help city government spend its funds well. One element of plan states “...to leverage and supplement city funds to the fullest

extent possible in order to maximize limited city resources.”

The city is active in its efforts to secure grants and low-interest loans in support of the capital transportation and utilities programs. During the last

five years, the city has been successful in obtaining \$76.3 million in grants and low-interest loans in support of its capital street, sewer, and water programs.

## Legislature directs CTED to look at agricultural lands, annexation, permits

Three studies required by the 2004 Washington State Legislature are now complete.

*Designation of Agricultural Lands in Chelan, King, Lewis, and Yakima Counties* examines GMA designation of these lands in the four counties.

The study found that designation of agricultural lands doesn't appear to affect local government tax revenue or its value for tax purposes. The study offers a list of measures local governments should adopt to maintain the agriculture land base and industry.

*Annexation Under the Growth Management Act: Barriers and Potential Solutions* found that some of the barriers to annexation include: residents' fears about paying higher taxes and infrastructure costs; residents' fears about development; and expenses faced by annexing cities for upgrading services. The report offers recommendations on local taxing authority and capital improvement needs and annexation procedures.

*Local Government Project Permitting* reports on a CTED survey of 22 buildable lands communities affected by the new, annual reporting requirements of HB 2811, adopted by the 2004 Legislature. The report found that to meet the new requirements jurisdictions will have additional costs for: (1) new permit processing systems or further upgrades to existing systems; (2) ongoing maintenance for the systems; (3) modifications to the systems; and (4) staff time.

For copies of the reports, see the

Growth Management Services section of the CTED Web site at [www.cted.wa.gov/growth](http://www.cted.wa.gov/growth).

## Focusing capital facilities in specific areas

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in three projects: revitalization along Highway 99 (a struggling post-war commercial strip), visioning for the Discovery Corridor (along Interstate 5), and development of the Barberton Business Triangle.

In Barberton, an unincorporated urban area, more than 500 acres of land designated for industrial and business park development have been skipped over because of deficient infrastructure and other challenges. Grants and design work have been completed for the major arterial roadway system in the area. A traffic circulation plan is in draft form, and negotiations are underway to complete the range of services from sewer to fiber optic cable.

The project will also include a promotional component to assist area businesses and property owners in working together toward the development of their area. Products of this effort, beyond simple infrastructure, will potentially include marketing materials, a Web site, “brand” identity for the area, a business improvement district, a design overlay, wetland banking, and more.

The county fosters job creation in the area with development application “fast-track” permitting. It may also adopt a planned action ordinance.



## Template aids small city in planning for capital facilities

**By Wendy Compton Ring, AICP**  
**Growth Management Services**

Before Cashmere was chosen to test the Capital Facilities Planning Template in 2001, the city didn't have a systematic capital facility planning process established. Planning for capital facilities was a last minute consideration and then the city would cobble something together for budgeting purposes, said Michelle Taylor, public works coordinator for the city.

When Cashmere started using the template, the city was in the process of planning and constructing a number of capital projects. The template was helpful in getting all the components included in each project, developing good project estimates, lining out the projects (determining which ones will be constructed first, second, third, etc.), and getting the projects organized.

Cashmere was able to customize the template to meet their specific needs, and they used it for a variety of projects including water, sewer, and stormwater. Finally, Cashmere found that the template has good project management information and was very helpful in developing specifications for projects.

Overall, the template has made the planning process easier, said Taylor. "It takes less time, less paper, and is more visual."

All of the information is in one place, which requires less explanation to elected officials and planning commissioners, Taylor added. They are better able to understand how estimates were generated and different decisions were made. The graphics were especially helpful in explaining capital facilities planning to them. Cashmere found it easier to include the various graphics in staff reports and presentation materials than to develop written explanations.

Taylor offered some words of wisdom for jurisdictions considering use of the template. She suggested taking the time up front to learn how to use the tool and making it a tool that's integrated into day-to-day processes. In addition, Taylor advises, be patient and be diligent.

# New tool to help CFP performance

**By Wendy Compton-Ring, AICP**  
**Senior Planner, Growth Management Services**

**D**o you have a long list of capital projects citizens want to have built? Are you overwhelmed with how to develop a CFP for your small community along with dozens of other job assignments? Was your first CFP a bare-bones affair that isn't meeting your city's needs?

A new tool to help local governments plan for capital facilities is available from CTED. Called the Capital Facilities Planning Template, the template is a series of tools to use in developing CFPs.

During 2001-02 CTED worked with the cities of McCleary, Cashmere, and Walla Walla and the Port of Vancouver, USA, to test the template. Test participants discovered by using the template they could more easily manage their capital facilities planning process while reflecting their own local circumstances and needs.

The Port of Vancouver, USA, developed more accurate project cost estimates, making their facility planning easier and more reliable. Cashmere staff reported they could not only deliver more accurate capital project cost estimates, but could produce better project designs. Walla Walla developed more useful project cost estimates by using the template. McCleary staff identified the value of the template in helping them develop better graphics for use in presentations to the city council and the public.

Developed in Microsoft Excel and Word, the template is designed to guide CFP development from possible projects to the rating and ranking of projects to evaluating projects in the context of the comprehensive plan.

The template offers a draft CFP document ready to be filled in with jurisdiction-specific information. Tools are also included to develop CFP presentations for planning commissions, elected officials, and citizens. Project

management tools are incorporated for use during project scoping and construction.

Training for using the template begins in the spring of 2005. CTED will initially focus on small jurisdictions – cities with a population of less than 5,000 and counties with a population of less than 50,000 – who are willing to use the template to update their CFP during the next calendar year. Training will be provided in three to four locations across the state with a goal of training the target audience in four years. The training will focus on capital facilities planning and offer hands-on experience with the computer application.

Support for the template will include a CFP Web page with guidance, fact sheets, important Web links, technical support, contact information, and a listserv for template users. In addition, one-on-one and follow-up training may be provided. CTED will engage in ongoing evaluation of the template to ensure its usability and the effectiveness of the training, outreach, and support. CTED's goal for the template is to enable local jurisdictions to develop exceptional CFPs.

## New planning guidebook available

Parks and open space play an important part in the state's growth management efforts to use limited land and resources wisely and to reverse the trend of converting undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density land use.

An updated guidebook – *Planning for Parks, Recreation, and Open Space in Your Community* – will be available February 1 from CTED and the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation to help communities plan for these important lands and facilities.

For a copy of the guidebook, see [www.cted.wa./growth](http://www.cted.wa./growth) or [www.iac.wa.gov/](http://www.iac.wa.gov/).

# Capital facilities planning: Spokane County's story

**By John Pederson**  
Spokane County Assistant Planning Director

Given the daunting task of preparing a GMA-compliant comprehensive plan and CFP, local jurisdictions have developed various methods to complete their planning obligations under RCW 36.70A.070.

In Spokane County we chose to assign one full-time associate planner, with the assistance of a qualified consultant, the task of developing a Capital Facilities and Utilities Element of the comprehensive plan and a separate CFP. Spokane County's GMA-compliant comprehensive plan and CFP were adopted on November 5, 2001. The CFP was effective on January 15, 2002, with adoption of phased development regulations.

At a glance, the Capital Facilities and Utilities Element of the comprehensive plan identified specific level of service (LOS) for public facilities and services (as adopted by the Steering Committee of Elected Officials). It also identified various goals and policies to ensure that public facilities and services support proposed development at established levels of service. The element also explains that the CFP is the component that links the comprehensive plan together and provides a reality check on the vision set forth in the comprehensive plan.

The adopted CFP represents the seven-year period of 2000 to 2006. It includes the base year 2000 and the 2001-2006 forecast needs for public facilities, along with specific capital projects expenditures and revenues that support Spokane County's current and future population and economy. The capital improvements are fully funded (i.e., not a wish list).

One of the goals of growth management is to have capital facilities

in place concurrent with development, a concept called concurrency. In Spokane County concurrency requires: (1) facilities serving the development must be in place at the time of development, and (2) such facilities have sufficient capacity to serve the development without decreasing LOS below minimum standards adopted in the CFP.

To carry out the adopted CFP, Spokane County adopted concurrency regulations on January 15, 2002. These regulations apply to new development and require review for transportation, public water, public sewer, fire protection, police protection, parks and recreation, libraries, solid waste disposal, and schools.

Direct concurrency includes transportation, public water, and public sewer. Direct concurrency is measured at the time of new development and requires issuance of concurrency certificates.

Indirect concurrency includes the remaining services – fire protection, police protection, parks and recreation, libraries, solid waste disposal, and schools. Indirect concurrency is measured through the CFP.

What can we learn from Spokane County's example? Concurrency regulations can and do provide a specific means to carry out capital facilities plans and policies. Concurrency regulations don't provide a specific means to resolve every service delivery question and questions as to quantifying and mitigating to indirect levels of service remain a topic for further discussion.

In addition, annual update of a CFP, while an admirable goal, provides an ongoing resource issue for local governments.

## *Local government help needed for infrastructure reporting system*

**By Bill Cole**  
Special Projects Coordinator,  
Washington State Public Works Board

The Infrastructure Assistance Coordinating Council, Transportation Improvement Board, and Public Works Board are working together to create a Web-based system that will track upcoming local government infrastructure projects for the years 2004 to 2009, and beyond, for 13 different systems.

The Local Infrastructure Needs Assessment System (LINAS) will enhance coordination among local jurisdictions, state and federal infrastructure programs, the Legislature, and the Governor and will demonstrate local governments' needs for funding assistance.

Information being collected includes the number of projects per year, the estimated cost, and the anticipated funding source(s). The information is available on-line at [www.linass.wa.gov](http://www.linass.wa.gov) with the ability to sort by jurisdiction type, system, year, funding source, county, or legislative district. Local governments will be able to update the information on-line on a schedule they set up.

Initially, the system will track activities in 13 infrastructure systems: adult criminal detention; cultural, recreational, and historical; domestic water; emergency and other public safety; energy; health and medical; juvenile criminal detention; public buildings and facilities; roads, streets, bridges, and surface transportation; sanitary sewer; solid waste and recycling; storm sewer; and telecommunication.

Data will be collected for 629 jurisdictions: 281 cities and towns, 39 counties, 76 port districts, 28 public utility districts, 29 tribes, and 176 water and sewer districts.

Local government assistance is needed. In order for this project to succeed, a copy of a local government's capital facilities plan, capital improvement plan/program, water system plan, sewer system plan, or comprehensive plan (whichever one is available) is needed to enter into the database.

As of January 1, information had been collected from 313 jurisdictions. The information collected covers most, but not all, of the infrastructure for 86 percent of the state's population.



# Simplifying capital facilities planning to make it a more useful community tool

By James Matthews  
Senior Planner, City of Issaquah

The Capital Facilities Element of a GMA comprehensive plan can be an especially effective planning tool when it clearly demonstrates the links between policy, LOS, budget, and capital projects.

While planners across the state are aware of the GMA mantra of a plan that is internally consistent and actively carried out, we are not always effective in demonstrating these links or their value to policy makers or the public. The City of Issaquah has attempted to create an element that is more accessible to the general reader and that more clearly monitors needs for future capital budgeting.

The Capital Facilities Element required by RCW 36.70A.070 contains a significant amount of technical detail: an inventory of existing facilities, a forecast of future needs, proposed new facilities, a six-year financing plan, policy to reassess the Land Use Element if existing needs cannot be met, and inclusion of all park and recreation facilities. It doesn't, however, need to develop into a "phone book" to meet GMA requirements.

The Issaquah element relies on simple spreadsheets with project names, funding, and sources rather than repeating budget or capital improvement program documents in their entirety. These documents are instead referenced as needed.

Elected officials have voiced appreciation for concise tables that monitor the city's performance against adopted LOS. The tables are included in the element when the measurements can be presented briefly in a meaningful way.



**One of the newer capital facilities in Issaquah is the city hall and police station as viewed from Memorial Park.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CITY OF ISSAQUAH

For example, the element monitors fire trucks per capita but does not delve into the details of water pressure readings.

The mayor, city council, and department heads have found the centralized LOS monitoring in the element to be helpful in annual budget preparation.

"A large amount of information must be analyzed in crafting an effective budget," said Issaquah Mayor Ava Frisinger. "The Capital Facilities Element helps us quickly focus on LOS commitments and their budgetary impact in the years ahead."

Hearing such positive feedback on the value of the Capital Facilities Element can be encouraging when preparing what can be one of the more time consuming annual plan amendments.

Citizens have expressed similar appreciation of the element for evaluating current and future LOS performance in a user-friendly manner. This has enabled the public to engage

in more meaningful participation in the budget process. For example, members of the public can more easily compare service expectations to fiscal constraints and provide better-informed opinions in the numerous meetings that are involved in capital planning and budgeting.

As in most places, the capital planning process in Issaquah includes citizen boards, the planning commission, and the city council in various public hearings and meetings on the capital improvement program, the municipal budget, and the Capital Facilities Element in an ongoing cyclical process. A well-crafted element provides the public with a bird's eye view of the relationships involved and with added accountability on capital investments.

The Issaquah Comprehensive Plan, including the Capital Facilities Element, can be viewed at [www.ci.issaquah.wa.us](http://www.ci.issaquah.wa.us).

# Suburban city plans for capital facilities

**By Michael Scarey, AICP**  
Senior Planner, SeaTac Planning Department

**B**ring up the subject of capital facilities plans, and you'll probably hear comments about being put to sleep. But in the City of SeaTac, the CFP really gets used.

The CFP is an asset to the city because it provides guidance to staff and decision makers and because it's a tool to guide planning for improvements that provide visible benefits to the community. It's much more than an exercise to meet a GMA requirement.

The CFP is an integral part of the city's comprehensive plan. Located in the Capital Facilities Element, it provides basic information about the upcoming six-year period, such as a summary of the total costs and available revenues, year-to-year population estimates, and current and adopted LOS standards for all of the capital facilities in the plan.

The plan covers city-owned buildings, parks and recreation facilities, fire services, and the surface water management and transportation systems. The CFP is updated each year as part of the city's annual amendment process, which includes public participation

through "open house" meetings and a public hearing.

The heart of the CFP is the assessment of the adequacy of all of the city's capital facilities at the end of the six-year period. The adequacy of facilities is estimated by calculating the adopted LOS (typically "quantity of facility X per 1,000 population") against the estimated population in the sixth year. If the analysis shows a deficiency in any type of facility, the city may address this deficiency by funding a new capital project within the six-year timeframe, or by making a deliberate and public decision to reduce the adopted LOS. The city may choose either course of action, but the process requires rational decision making and provides the public with a voice in the process.

The CFP identifies funding sources for each capital project, so that all projects are fully funded within the six-year time frame by the time the amendments are adopted.

The final aspect of the CFP is SeaTac's unique approach that incorporates the operation and maintenance (O&M) costs for each capital project. This

allows the city council to easily identify those projects where capital costs are relatively low, but ongoing O&M costs are high. For example, a fire truck may be purchased for less than \$1 million, but the additional crew needed to operate it may add \$250,000 per year for as long as the vehicle is in service.

SeaTac is typical of many areas that were fully developed communities prior to incorporation as cities or towns, for whom separate utility districts were already providing services. Two electrical utilities, three sewer districts, and four water districts provide service to SeaTac residents and businesses. The city's comprehensive plan addresses utility service through its Utilities Element, so issues related to these services are not part of the CFP.

The individual service districts through their own CFPs address capital planning issues. The city coordinates with these districts by providing comprehensive plan amendments for review and reviewing district plan updates.



**SeaTac's capital facilities plan guides the city in the development of community services such as the new, \$4.2 million Joint Public Works and Parks Maintenance Facility.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE  
CITY OF SEATAC

# Addressing land use in transportation projects

**By Rocky Piro**  
Principal Planner,  
Puget Sound Regional Council

Even prior to the adoption of the GMA, more and more attention was being given to the important linkage that land use and transportation planning have with one another. This relationship was reaffirmed in the act itself, with expectations that (1) land use assumptions be factored into transportation elements, (2) jurisdictions consider the impacts of their transportation plans on neighboring jurisdictions, and (3) regional transportation plans address mixed-use development, residential densities, and other land use issues.

In the Central Puget Sound region, the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) has been working to better integrate its federal funding responsibilities for transportation projects to its growth management duties. PSRC funding now focuses on financing transportation projects and programs that contribute to the development of regional growth centers, manufacturing/industrial centers, and the connecting corridors among these centers.

The four-county metropolitan region has 24 designated regional growth centers – places that have made a commitment to take on additional population and employment growth in a compact, mixed-use environment that encourages walking, biking, and increased transit use. The development planned for these locations is recognized as key in achieving the region's overall growth strategy. The region also has eight designated manufacturing/

industrial centers, which are prominent employment locations – with high concentrations of manufacturing facilities, warehouses, and office complexes.

By focusing on centers, the PSRC project selection process has been successful in funding bus replacements, transit shelters, commuter rail extensions, new connections to the region's HOV lanes, and bicycle and

pedestrian improvements, as well as the redevelopment of roadways. Each project submitted for PSRC funds must demonstrate consistency with the region's multicounty planning policies, adopted under the GMA. Projects are then evaluated with criteria based on the centers-development concept in the region's long-range growth and transportation strategies.

## Puget Sound Regional Council Updates VISION 2020

**By Ben Bakkenta**  
Principal Planner,  
Puget Sound Regional Council

For the last 14 years, the Central Puget Sound region has been united behind a growth, transportation, and economic strategy that balances competing interests and promotes a shared vision for the future.

VISION 2020 has guided the wiser use of land and helped to slow the pace of sprawl in King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. The region's leadership is launching an effort to build on this success and look ahead another 20 years to the year 2040, with a continued emphasis on focusing growth into defined urban areas, creating compact communities linked by high-quality transportation choices, and supporting a vibrant and innovative economy.

As the region's GMA Multicounty Planning Policies, the revitalized vision will include a Regional Economic Strategy, refine the region's approach to environmental protection, and place increased emphasis on the social implications of decisions,

implementation, and measuring success.

The effort requires a different approach – one built on new relationships, better information, and improved tools.

PSRC has joined forces with the region's Economic Development District and expanded other partnerships. The update will consider recent research on public health, energy use, and regional demographics, lessons that have been learned through a decade of local implementation of the GMA, and information garnered from extensive outreach to identify the issues that matter to people. PSRC is also developing UrbanSim – a groundbreaking new way to model and forecast growth in the region. It will provide a more sophisticated, market-based approach to investigating what the future might bring.

In short, the vision will be more complete, measurable, and easier to implement so that at the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the Central Puget Sound region is still admired for its beauty, economic vitality, and quality of life.

**Washington State Department of Community,  
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